

Sometimes Life Hits Back by Yowowwhatstrangethings

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Summary:

Mike Wheeler figures his entire high school career will follow the same pattern: Go to school, get good grades, say something stupid, get beat up. He's not sure he's opposed to a certain girl breaking that pattern.

Jane "Eleven" Hopper loves lacrosse with every fiber of her being, and she loves the people that come with the sport even more, if it were possible. She doesn't think that life could get any better, but then her friend group grows, despite the fact that the nerdy boy she found on the floor can't seem to stop getting himself into trouble.

Or

Jock!El and Nerd!Mike inspired by @eleventhemage on tumblr!

1. Chapter One

Author's Note:

- For [gayrefrain](#).

Hey guys! There's gonna be a lot of lacrosse terminology in this fic, but I promise that all lacrosse information will be explained throughout the story. Hope you enjoy

Also, a crosse is basically a long stick with a net on the end, which is what lacrosse players use to get the ball around the field.

Eleven felt sweat drip into her eye, and she reached up to wipe her forehead in utter annoyance. How the hell was she supposed to focus with sweat blurring her vision?

“You girls already have four! I suggest you figure out your problems right now or I will add to that number.” Her coach was shouting from off to the side, clearly unimpressed from their lack of control over the ball. She exchanged a look with Max, who was leaning against her crosse while she tried to catch her breath.

The sharp blow of the whistle shattered through the sounds of panting coming from her teammates, and she quickly sprung in to action, taking a few quick steps back to get out of the reach of her defender.

She scanned the field quickly, taking in where every player was, before barking out a command, “Screen!”

Her players took action immediately, Jo sprinting over and anchoring herself to the ground to the right of the defender that was facing Eleven, and she took off, sprinting behind Jo. Her defender tried to follow, but she found herself running straight into Jo's chest. By the time she recovered, Eleven was already halfway down the field, gearing up to drive in to the goal. All the defenders caught on to her plan pretty quickly, and they crowded her, shooing her off towards

the right of the goal.

Good. That was what she wanted them to do.

Max, dependable as always, was cutting straight through the opening the defenders left in their wake, and Eleven reared back, launching the ball in a spot on pass to the red headed midfielder. Max scooped it out of the air and, in one swift motion, hurled it past the unsuspecting goalie.

The girls cheered, and her coach began clapping as she walked over to them.

“Thank you! That was a beautiful play. Eleven, Max you just saved your team from another set of sprints,” Coach Katelyn was grinning from ear to ear, “That being said, you still managed to rack up four down-and-backs, so get on the base line.”

The entire team groaned, but Eleven found herself smiling softly as she looked around at the team that had become family, all of them exhausted from playing the sport they loved.

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Mike usually loved being able to walk down the empty hallways of the school after AV club ended, when all the students had long vacated the building. It made everything feel calmer knowing that he was the only one there aside from the occasional disgruntled teacher.

That peaceful feeling was shattered like glass when he felt a hand grab him from behind by the collar of his sweater as he went to open his locker.

Troy Harrington was your classic run of the mill jock that couldn't seem to resist the urge to punch a nerdy kids lights out. He was the prefect example of a kid who's wealth and social status went straight to his ego, building it up higher than a skyscraper

Sadly for Mike, he was well known for being a pretty nerdy kid. In fact, Troy's violent tendencies only seem to grow when he got near Mike and his friends.

“You really thought you’d be able to get away with embarrassing me in front of everyone unscathed, Wheeler?” Troy was all up in his face, his fists balled up in Mike’s shirt as he slammed him against the wall of lockers, “You’re much dumber than you’d have everyone believe.”

Mike rolled his eyes despite the fact that his feet weren’t touching the floor, “Please, Troy. Like I was under any delusion that you wouldn’t beat me up anyways. I figured this time you might as well have a good reason.”

Earlier that day, Mike had lost his patience with Troy, and he had pulled what he had meant to be a harmless prank, but had ended with Troy under the emergency shower that all science classrooms were equipped with. His teacher had given him a lecture, but thankfully he managed to narrowly avoid a detention. How, Mike didn’t know.

Troy growled under his breath and reared back, slamming a fist into Mike’s cheekbone. He started pounding him, landing another fist on his jaw, and then another on his nose, and he felt blood spray out of it as Troy tossed him across the hallway like a rag doll. Troy placed a swift kick to the middle of his stomach, and Mike wheezed as he curled in himself. He kicked him twice more before leaning down to Mike’s crumpled form, “Next time, think twice before messing with me, Wheeler.”

Mike spit blood in his general direction, “Next time, kiss my ass, Harrington.”

Troy scrunched his face up and kicked Mike right in the middle of his chest before sauntering off down the hall, leaving the gangly form of the nerdy teenager groaning in the middle of the corridor.

Mike rolled himself onto his back and groaned. He made no attempt to get up, though, figuring his friends would come looking for him in a few minutes and help him get home.

So, Mike laid there, blood dripping down the sides of his face, eye beginning to swell, and waited.

Of all the things Eleven expected to see when she went to grab a book from her locker after lacrosse practice, a tall gangly boy with a mop of black hair bleeding onto the waxed tile floors of the school was not anywhere on that list.

She immediately rushed to his side, ignoring her aching muscles as she knelt down next to his head, “Oh my god, are you okay?”

The boy’s eyes cracked open slowly, and he took her in before they snapped open wide. He seemed to be awestruck by her presence until he realized she was waiting for him to answer her. He blinked a few times before saying, “Um, aside from the internal bleeding? Probably not.”

She frowned before reaching to help sit him up, practically having to drag him over to the wall so that he could lean against the lockers.

Once he was settled, she asked the question that was being shouted above all others in her head, “What happened to you?”

He winced as he wiped at some of the blood that had made its way to his ear, and Eleven quickly reached into her bag to grab one of her old t-shirts that she practiced in. It probably wasn’t the cleanest considering she had no idea how long it had been sitting in there, but it was better than nothing. She hesitantly reached out towards his face, bringing it close to his nose, but not actually touching him. He stared at her for a second before giving her a slight nod in permission, and she gently began to wipe at the blood coating his pale skin.

“Troy Harrington decided it was time to assert his dominance over me. It didn’t work.” He gave a slight grin to her before wincing, “I still think he’s an imbecile.”

She nodded in understanding, reaching for her water bottle to wet the spare t-shirt, before reaching back out with the damp cloth to continue cleaning his face, “You’re right.”

As she cleaned, she began to notice that he had freckles scattered across his nose. It reminded her of constellations. In fact, there was a small set of freckles under his left eye that looked vaguely like the

Big Dipper -

“Mike!”

They both jumped as a voice cracked through the comfortable silence that they had fallen into. Eleven fell back onto her butt from where she had been crouched in front of the boy -Mike - and she let out a yelp in surprise.

A boy with ridiculously curly hair tucked under a red, white and blue cap rounded the corner, “Mike! Where have you- whoa what the hell happened, man?”

Mike grimaced, “Hey, Dustin.”

Dustin crouched on Mike’s other side as Eleven got to her feet again.

“Can you help me get him outside?” Dustin asked, looking up at her, worry written all over his face.

She nodded, and together they hoisted him up, dragging him out to where the rest of his friends were waiting.

About halfway there, Mike passed out.

2. Chapter 2

Suddenly, Eleven was starting to see Mike everywhere.

She would see his head flash by in the hallway, sometimes in a deep discussion with the curly-haired boy -Dustin. His head sticks out like a sore thumb at the front of her English class now that she knows who he is, and his table of rambunctious nerds at lunch is much closer to where she eats than she realized.

It's odd to think that once someone enters your gravity, you start to realize that they were actually always close by, hanging on the edges but never really coming close enough to be in your orbit.

She doesn't know yet if it bothers her.

How had it taken this long for her to notice his near constant presence? They had a class together, she's pretty sure that she recognizes his messy hair from the tech crew that sets up for the announcers at her lacrosse games, and when you got right down to it, he was seriously cute.

"Hey, what happened to you yesterday?"

Eleven felt herself tense, and she jumped back in surprise at Max's sudden intrusion into her thoughts, "What?"

Max stared at her for a second, her face scrunched in confusion, "The team grabbed food after practice and we were noticeably down a captain. You were supposed to meet us at Benny's, what happened?"

"Oh." Eleven felt her mind whirring trying to think of a normal way to say *I found a boy half dead and bleeding in the middle of the hallway and I couldn't just leave him there so I helped drag him outside to his friends*. Once she realized that there really wasn't a normal way to say it, she just went with exactly that, "I found a boy in the hallway that had been beaten to a pulp and I helped his friends get him out of here. Benny's must have just slipped my mind, I guess."

When she looked at Max's face, the sheer shock and confusion

plastered on it was laughable, “You what? Who was it? Who beat him up?”

“His name was Mike. And obviously it was that imbecile Harrington.” She scowled as she thought of that runt. He had been her least favorite person for a while now, but seeing first hand what he does to others made her like him even less, which she didn’t know was possible.

Max didn’t seem to notice her change in demeanor, seemingly lost in thought, “Wait, Mike? As in Mike Wheeler? The AV club kid that helps with our games?”

“Yeah. That’s the one.”

“Hm. I can’t believe he was even here that late. And where were his friends? Doesn’t he always travel in a pack?” Max asked.

Eleven looked at her weirdly, “How do you know so much about him?”

Max gave her a *duh* look, “His friend Lucas is my lab partner.”

“Oh.” She shrugged, “Well I don’t know what he was doing here so late, or why his friends weren’t with him.”

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Mike’s face ached terribly as his mother redid the hasty bandages that Dustin had plastered across his face the day before. He winced as she pulled off the Star Wars bandage from his eyebrow, and replaced with a butterfly bandage that tugged weirdly at his skin.

“There.” She said, brushing his hair to the side as she turned to clean the bandage wrappers off of the counter, “All done.”

Mike turned to the mirror to inspect the damage.

He had cuts littering his face, probably from that stupid ring Troy like to flaunt all the time. There was one running through his left eyebrow, another across the bridge of his nose. His lips were split in two places, and there was a bruise on his jawline. Most of the

damage was on the left side of his face, save for the small cut on his right cheek one from where he had slammed his face into the ground.

Overall, he looked like shit.

He sighed as he turned away, moving out of the bathroom, kissing his mom's cheek on the way, "Thanks, Mom."

Mike could feel a dull pain in his ribs, briefly considering the possibility that Harrington had cracked one before deciding that it would definitely hurt worse if that was the case.

No matter how much his mom pestered him about who had taken to pummeling him, he would just tell her that someone had jumped him on the way out to his car at the end of the day. Which, while being a total lie, was really the best thing to give her, knowing that if he told her Troy Harrington had beaten him down in the middle of the school hallway, she'd have taken it to the principal immediately. That would have only made things worse, though, as Troy was a star athlete. Without any real proof that he was the culprit, it would've only caused another beating.

So he'd kept his mouth shut.

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That day, at lunch, Mike noticed her.

The girl that helped him when he was a bleeding mess laying in the middle of a hallway. He knew exactly who she was, having seen her superb athletic skills whenever he helped set up sound equipment for the lacrosse games. Eleven.

He could see her almost perfectly from his normal seat, right next to Dustin. Her dark brown hair was falling out of a messy braid, and she was laughing at something one of her friends had said.

"You should thank her."

Mike jumped as he whipped his head to look at Dustin, "Huh?"

"You should go and thank her," Dustin said with a look on his face

that said *duh*, “She helped me drag your unconscious ass all the way out of the school and into your car. You should thank her for it.”

“No! I’m not going over there.” Mike said.

“Mike.” Lucas was leaning over the table, “You are going to get your ass up and go over there and thank her for practically carrying you out of the school. Trust me, your gangly limbs do not cooperate when you’re out cold. The girl deserves a damn medal for having to deal with. The least you can do is say thank you.”

Mike looked at him, dread falling over him as he looked over at Will, losing all hope as he nodded his head in encouragement.

Once he realized there was no way to talk his way out of this, he got up and took a deep breath before walking over to the table.

A couple of the girls looked up at him as he approached Eleven from behind, and he felt like they knew he was nervous. He had to push aside his doubts and look away from their face, instead focusing on the braid.

When he was right behind her, the whole table had gone quiet, the ones facing Eleven staring at him hard.

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It took Eleven a couple of seconds to notice that all of her friends weren’t even looking at her while she spoke. She turned to see what they were looking at, and suddenly, Mike was there once again. He looked awful, his face splattered with cuts and bruises, butterfly bandages adorning his features and disguising his freckles.

“Uh, hi.” He said, reaching up to the back of his neck, scratching it as he shifted his weight from foot to foot, “I just wanted to thank you. You know, for yesterday.”

She blinked up at him, “Um, it was really no problem. I couldn’t just leave you there.”

His hand shot out towards her and he was quick to respond, “No, that’s the thing, you totally could’ve. And there’s a good amount of

people that I know who would've left me there. But you didn't, you-" he paused, a small smile grew on his face "-you dragged my unconscious ass through the school. You didn't have to, but you did. So thank you."

Before she could even open her mouth to respond he had started walking backwards, smiling once more before turning around to join his friends.

She frowned in confusion, staring at his mussed hair. When she turned to face her friends again, they were staring at her.

Max was the first to speak, "That was weird."

"Yeah." She replied, looking over her shoulder again to look at him, "It was."